How and What to Write as News

How and What to Write as News

A Book for Correspondents and Editors

BY

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PORTE PUBLISHING COMPANY

SALT LAKE CITY UTAH

Preface

21/Jan. 27/Feb. 1922

PREFACE

NEWSPAPERS published in villages, towns and the smaller cities print news letters from neighboring villages and towns, and from the surrounding farming districts. The writers of these news letters are generally called country correspondents.

The work of the country correspondent is not only interesting, but instructive. It teaches him how to spell, how to punctuate, how to avoid errors in grammar, in fact how to use the English language correctly. It develops the powers of perception as nothing else will.

The country correspondent usually receives no remuneration for his services, except a free copy of the paper he writes for. If he is at all ambitious, he can well afford to do this work, not only because of its educational features, but because of the distinction it will earn him. The editor of a newspaper enjoys a peculiar prominence in his community. The country correspondent, being in reality the news editor of the paper for his territory, enjoys the same prominence in that territory. He does this even if his paper is one of those which do not publish the names of their country correspondents, as the people of nearly every locality know who writes the items from their territory.

Usually the country correspondent begins work under a great handicap. Most editors are so busy, that the

only instructions they find time to give a new correspondent are about as follows: "Get all the news you can. We can use as much as a column a week. Send it so that it reaches our office by Tuesday noon. Write only on one side of the paper."

Instructions, or lack of instructions, like this, place the embryo correspondent in about the same position as would be that of a boy desiring to become a machinist, if he were put into a machine shop and told to "get busy," and then left to do the things he surmised ought to be done in the way he presumed they should be done.

This little book is written for the purpose of helping overcome this handicap. It is intended to tell the correspondent what he should do and how to do it, and what he should not do; and assist him to do better work and to do it with less exertion. The work also will be found a valuable aid to the average country editor and a great help in the way of suggestions as to possible news items.

"No news worth mentioning"—is generally the fault of the correspondent or news editor. No locality but what has hundreds of happenings which can be counted as news. This book will help to suggest news that the readers of a paper want. It probably is the most comprehensive and complete work of its kind ever published.

CARL A. JETTINGER.

Delphos, Ohio, January, 1921.

To News Editors
and Correspondents

TO NEWS EDITORS AND CORRESPONDENTS

IF, when beginning to write the news for a paper, you find it difficult to get items, or to write them after you have gotten them, do not become discouraged. Do the best you can, and keep plugging away. Diligent study of this book, and a little practice, will soon enable you to secure and write all the news from your territory that your paper should print.

If you are a correspondent, watch the changes the editor makes in your items, and what errors in grammar and spelling he corrects. It is not worth while worrying about the mistakes you have made—try to remember them and not to make them again.

The better the identity of the correspondent is known, the more prominence he gains in his community, the better will be his work. If the paper for which you write is one of those that do not publish the names of their correspondents with their items, make known your identity when interviewing people who may give you items and help you with suggestions. It will be a great help to you and place you in a position to make friends for yourself and for the paper you write for.

If you become acquainted with other correspondents for the paper or with correspondents for other papers, keep on good terms with them. Very often they can be of assistance to you.

Things the Correspondent Must Know

THINGS THE CORRESPONDENT MUST KNOW

BEFORE beginning to write for a newspaper the new correspondent should have the following information:

The territory he is to write from and its boundaries.

How often he is to write.

When his news letters should reach the editor.

How much space the paper can give him.

Whether late news is to be sent in by telephone, and if so, what is the latest possible moment at which the paper can use it.

This information should be obtained from the editor in person, if possible.

After you have begun to write for the paper, visit the editor occasionally and have a chat with him. It will add interest to your work and assist you in doing it.

The Kind of Reading Matter a Newspaper Wants

THE KIND OF READING MATTER A NEWSPAPER WANTS

PUBLISHING a newspaper is purely a business undertaking. To be successful, a newspaper must yield a fair income to its owner, in return for the labor spent upon it and the capital invested. A newspaper that does not earn enough to enable its publishers to meet obligations with reasonable promptness, and to support themselves and their families in a style befitting their station in life, is a failure. Such a paper can have but little standing in its community and but little influence for the betterment of the community and of mankind.

To become a successful business undertaking, a newspaper must, first of all, have the good will of its subscribers and advertisers and of the public in general. To gain their confidence and support, it must publish such reading matter as the public wants to read, and this reading matter must be written in a style that meets with the likes and avoids the dislikes of the public.

The successful merchant studies the wants of his community and buys his stock with the view of putting himself in position to supply these wants, giving consideration to prevailing styles, season, quality and local

preference. People buy what suits their individual requirements and taste. They do this just as much with newspapers as with dry goods, clothing, furniture or anything else.

In some lines of business—dry goods, millinery and clothing, for instance—styles change rapidly and frequently. Such is not the case in the newspaper business, but even newspaper styles change. This can be readily seen by a comparison of papers printed fifty, or even twenty-five years ago, with present-day papers. Fifty years ago the readers of newspapers wanted mainly editorials and similar matter; now they want news.

To succeed at the present time, a newspaper must bring as much news as possible; and it must bring news of the kind the majority of its readers are interested in; and this news must be written in a style that appeals to the majority of the readers of the paper. News should be written in fairly good English.

He who aspires to become a successful newspaper correspondent or news editor must learn to view the matter he writes from the viewpoint of the average person in his community; and he must write it in such a way that the majority of the people in that neighborhood will be pleased to read it. This holds good whether the particular item and style appeals to the individual taste of the writer or not. He must write what the people want, whether it is what he wants or not.

This does not mean that he need be dishonest in his articles; that he must write things that he is opposed

to. It does mean, however, that he must not write things that might offend, because that would make enemies for the correspondent and for the paper. It means, furthermore, that he must not write things that do not interest the general public of the neighborhood, because that would be waste of labor for him, and, if the paper printed them, waste of the time of the compositor who set them up and of the paper on which they were printed.

What Is News?

WHAT IS NEWS?

IN a general sense anything that happens is news; but not everything that happens is news worth printing and news fit to print.

To determine what is news, always ask yourself the following questions:

Does the thing that happened interest or please the people who read the paper?

Does it convey information to them which they wish to possess?

Is it fit to print?

As you write particularly for your own community, judge first from the likes and dislikes of that community, but do not forget that you are writing also for the people who formerly lived in your neighborhood.

Many of these, though living hundreds of miles away, still take the home paper, that they may keep informed about what is happening among their former neighbors, friends and relatives, back home. Do not forget that you must write not only for your friends and relatives, but for the entire community; not only for the people you like, but also for those you do not care for, or dislike. To be successful as a correspondent, you must please the majority of these people.

Possible News Items

POSSIBLE NEWS ITEMS

SUCH a vast variety of things can happen, that it is impossible to compile a complete list of possible subjects for news items. To assist you in the discovery of items that you might overlook, a list of some of the more important subjects for news items is printed herewith. You will find a frequent perusal of this list helpful. Bear in mind that the list is incomplete; that there are many other subjects for possible news items; that some of them, because of their unusualness, may be particularly valuable for that purpose; that every state and every locality offers subjects for news items that are peculiar to that state or locality and are almost sure to have been overlooked in this list.

Accidents.
Amateur theatricals.
Anniversaries—wedding, lodge.
Annual meetings.
Appointments of public officials.
Balls.
Baptisms—if connected with festivities.
Baseball and other games.
Births.
Boosting—town, school, etc.

Bridges—new, improvements and alterations.
Buildings—new, improvements and alterations.
Burglaries.
Business undertakings, changes, failures, etc.
Caucuses.
Cemeteries—new, improvements, alterations, abandonment.
Changes in business.
Church activities.
Club doings.
Commencements—school.
Concerts.
Confirmations.
Contests.
Co-operative companies—farmers, labor, etc.
Crime.
Crops—unusual things about.
Cyclones.
Curiosities—discovery of.
Damage—wind, water, hail, other causes.
Dams—irrigation, power and flood control.
Dances.
Deaths.
Dedications.
Directors' meetings.
Ditches—county and township.
Divorces.
Early fruits, grain and vegetables.
Eisteddfods.

Elections—political, lodge, society, etc.
Entertainments.
Exercises—school.
Exhibits.
Factories and industries—new, improvements, alterations.
Farm bureau meetings and activities.
Farm improvements.
Farmers' clubs and organizations.
Firms—changes in, formation of new and dissolution of.
Fires.
Floods.
Former residents—happenings to, visits of.
Football games.
Fruits, early—grain, vegetables.
Funerals.
Graduates—names of.
Graduation exercises.
Grange doings.
Historical items, local.
Home-comings.
Hotels—prominent visitors.
House warmings.
Humorous happenings.
Illness—serious or unusual.
Improvements—public, private.
Industries—new, expansion, removal.
Initiations—connected with festivities.

Installations.
Inventions—if by local persons.
Irrigation dams and ditches.
Labor union doings.
Lawsuits.
Lectures.
Light plants—erection, improvement.
Lodge doings.
Losses—money, things of value.
Marriages.
Meetings of public interest.
Mines—opening of new, strikes, etc.
Ministers—changes, installation, resignation.
Mobs.
Murders.
Mutual insurance doings—if local.
Mutual protective work—local.
Newcomers—homes of, former location.
Obituaries—prominent persons only.
Odd and unusual happenings.
Oil and gas wells—drilling of new, unusual strikes, etc.
Old time stories—local.
Ownership—changes of.
Parties.
Personal items.
Political rallies and meetings.
Private theatricals.
Projects of public interest.

Public officials, important actions of.
Public sales.
Real estate sales.
Receptions.
Removals.
Reports of public officials.
Resignations of persons in prominent positions.
Residence—changes of.
Reunions.
Revival meetings.
Road improvements and changes.
Robberies.
Runaways.
Sales.
Sickness—serious or unusual.
School doings.
School houses—new, changes, alteration of.
Secret societies.
Socials.
Society doings.
Sports—local only.
Stock companies—formations of new, changes in capital, dissolution of.
Storms—if damage has been done.
Strikes and lockouts.
Suicides.
Surgical operations—serious.
Swindles—when worked within neighborhood.
Teachers—employment of.

Teachers' institutes.
Theft.
Tournaments.
Traveling—coming and going.
Untold stories of local or historical interest.
Vacations.
Violence.
Visits and visitors.
Water works plants—erection, improvement of.
Weather—local, unusual conditions only.
Wedding anniversaries.
Women—local matters of interest to them.
Women's club doings.
Wrecks.

What Is Not News

WHAT IS NOT NEWS

HAPPENINGS long past or well known are not news. Nothing is news that has happened so long ago that nearly everybody knows about it, or that the interest in its has died out. The sooner after it happens the news item is published, the greater is its value. To be news, it must be fresh, and the fresher, the better. An item about something that happened two or three days ago has very little news value to a daily paper, and an item about something that happened two or three weeks ago has still less news value to a weekly newspaper.

Trivial matters are not news. If Johnnie Brown has a cold, that is not news, but if he has some contagious, serious or unusual disease, that is news. If Grandma Lamport, who is extremely old and feeble, contracts a severe cold, that may be news, because, on account of her feebleness, even a cold may endanger her life.

If someone builds a hen house, that fact has virtually no news value, but if he builds a large house or barn, that has. If he paints his hen house, that is not news, but if he has his fine home painted and decorated, that may be important enough for a small news item.

Advertising is not news. If a store sells sugar or coffee at a ridiculously low price, that is not news, even though the price is unusual. It is advertising, for which the store should pay. If the same store adds a dry goods department to its business, a short write-up about it is legitimate news, because it is an improvement to the town, and the people of every village and town like to read items that tell of enterprise and prosperity in their community. In this case the write-up might induce the owner of the store to do some newspaper advertising. An item about the sugar being sold at a low price would make it needless for its seller to advertise. The article, the price and the place all being mentioned, the item would in itself be the best kind of advertising.

Correspondents must be exceedingly careful to distinguish between advertising and news, especially where items are handed to him, with the request to insert them. Many persons are very adept in getting free advertising and thereby beating the publisher out of part of his legitimate income.

As a rule everything that tends to induce people to part with money, or anything of value, is advertising.

Many things must be treated as advertising, because they are not of interest to a sufficiently large number of people. Among these are cards of thanks; long, flowery obituaries; obituaries of persons of whose death or death and funeral notices containing the more important obituary matter have already been published;

obituary poetry; notices of coming meetings of lodges, societies, etc.

Advance notices of concerts, socials, card parties, fairs, lectures or recitals, where admission is charged or the persons in charge are looking for personal gain, are advertising. Notice that some person is going to hold a public sale, or begin to operate a cider, cane or feed mill, for pay, is advertising. An item telling that some store is the best one in town to deal at, or that some person is the best painter or paper hanger in the neighborhood, is advertising, pure and simple.

While the policies of newspapers differ greatly in regard to such indirect advertising, most publishers are decidedly liberal and will publish, free of charge, as news, a short item of coming concerts, fairs, socials or lectures, if they are being arranged for the benefit of some church, lodge or other organization of a more or less public nature. Acquaint yourself with the policy of the paper you write for and act in accordance.

If some person gives you an item of which you are uncertain whether it will be regarded as news or as advertising, explain this to him. Also ask him if he will pay for the item if the publisher decides it is advertising.

Happenings of frequent occurrence are not news. If a farmer has a son at college who comes home to spend Sundays, the son's weekly visit should not be regarded as news; but if the son comes home only every month

or two, his visits are news. If an attorney goes to the county seat on business every week or so, that fact has but little news value. It is so common an occurrence, and neither the attorney nor his friends are concerned whether it is reported in the paper or not. If an old lady, who hardly ever leaves her home, goes to the county seat for a visit, that is news, because it is not a common occurrence, and the old lady and her friends are each interested in an item telling about her visit.

If the minister of a nearby city comes to a country church to preach every Sunday evening, that is not news. If on some Sunday he changes the time of the services and comes in the afternoon instead, that is interesting news to the people who attend that church. If another minister preaches in place of the regular minister, that is news.

If the members of a school board hold their regular monthly meeting and transact only routine business, such as allowing bills, that is not news. If at one of these regular meetings they hire a new teacher, make changes in the studies, order improvements or do something worth while that they do not do at every meeting, that is news.

If a farmer buys an automobile, that is not news, but if he buys an aeroplane, that is news, because it is unusual. If he buys an ordinary horse or cow, that is not news, because it is usual. If he buys an unusually fine blooded animal at an uncommonly high price, that is news.

Opinions and criticisms are not news. Broadly speaking, comment of any kind is not within the province of the newspaper correspondent. This is particularly true of the kind of comment which revels in finding fault, in belittling the actions of others, in questioning their motives and in saying uncomplimentary things about them. Comment and criticism should come only from the editorial department of a newspaper—not from the news-gathering department.

He who attempts to vent his spleen through the columns of a newspaper is a poor correspondent, at best, if he does it openly. He who tries to do this by insinuations, or by word juggling, so that his evil intent may escape the watchful eyes of the editor, is not only a poor correspondent, but a sneaking coward.

Thoughtless persons say enough mean things every day, so that it is altogether superfluous for the newspapers to say them.

If some person in your community does something which is praiseworthy, you may say a few nice words about it even if what you say is not strictly news. The editor will be glad to publish the item, because it will make friends for you and for the paper. Lavish use of such complimentary items, however, causes people soon to tire of them.

Never comment on anything in such a way that it might offend. Flatly refuse to let any person use you as the means of "getting even" with someone else. Let people settle their quarrels themselves. It is worth

while to bear in mind that a newspaper must live off its friends, and for that reason should refrain from making enemies.

Unconfirmed rumor is not news. If you can not chase down a rumor so that you may have something definite and certain to say, say nothing about it. People want their newspapers to be reliable, to bring facts—not rumors.

Hidden meaning stories and jokes are not news. An item reading "John Small's automobile can be seen standing in front of the Martin Miller home every Sunday evening of late. Ask Tom Small for particulars," is not news and should never be written. It tells nothing and is unintelligible to all but very few persons. It is not news, because of its triviality. It may cause embarrassment to members of the Small and Miller families and therefore is unfair to them. It is unfair to the newspaper, because the families mentioned may take offense at it.

At best such items are only cheap jokes; and a newspaper is not a cheap joke book. Waste no time upon the perpetration of such alleged jokes; they only cause trouble. Never try to get "smart" or "cute." It is only a waste of time. Write only sensible items.

Discussions are not news. Discussions about religion, politics, the liquor question, or about anything

else are not news. They never convince a solitary person, and they invariably make enemies for the paper that publishes them. Your time should be too valuable to waste on them. If you send them to your paper, they will most likely be dumped into the waste basket.

Poetry is not news. A person never connected with the office of a publication would be surprised to learn how many persons who know nothing about prosody—who never heard of meter, poetic feet, or even accent—think they can write poetry. Newspaper readers usually care nothing for poetry. Write none yourself. If someone offers you poetry for publication, tell him that the newspaper lacks space to print it and advise him to send it to some magazine.

News that Should be Suppressed

NEWS THAT SHOULD BE SUPPRESSED

GAMES of chance and lotteries: The anti-lottery laws of the United States are drastic. Under these laws the publisher lays himself liable to prosecution if he prints an article about someone winning a pillow, chanced off at a church social, or winning a prize at a card party. They prohibit the publication of absolutely everything that has the slightest connection with a game of chance.

It is often difficult to say what might be considered a game of chance. It has been held that the sale of guesses on the number of votes the candidate that would be elected as president of the United States would receive, was not a game of chance, as it required skill and foresight to guess the correct number. At another time it was held that a merchant who gave each person who called at his store and registered, a chance on a fine bedroom suite, regardless of whether the person purchased something or not, was running a lottery. In this same case the chances cost those who received them absolutely nothing but the asking. The United States Post Office Department at that time held that the trouble of going to the store to register was worth something and that therefore every person who received a chance had paid something for it.

When you are uncertain as to whether an item might conflict with these—or any other laws—write the item, stating the facts, just as they are, and call the attention of the editor to it. He can use his own judgment and run the risk of publication, if he wants to assume it.

Anything of a defamatory character that is printed in a newspaper lays the publisher liable to suit for damages, for libel, unless its truth can be established. As the correspondent too might be held liable, he should be careful not to write anything that might be held as injurious to the reputation of anyone, unless unimpeachable evidence of the truth of the statement can be produced.

Many persons believe that in such cases they can avoid liability if they use such phrases as "it has been reported" or "some people are of the opinion." This is not true. According to law, every person has the right to a good reputation, until he has done something wrong. The merest insinuation that he may have done or may do something wrong, may injure this reputation; and, unless the insinuation can be shown to be based upon truth, gives him the right to sue for damages for libel or slander.

If you are convinced you have the facts, do not out of fear of committing libel on this account hesitate to send in an item telling about some misdeed. The paper wants the news and must assume some risks. When you do write such an item, however, be careful. State

only the absolute facts and state them in a way that will leave no room for misunderstanding. Tell the truth and only the truth, and be sure to tell the full truth. The editor then is in position to know whether the item can be published with safety, or whether changes must be made in it. Call his attention to the item, and he will take care to protect not only himself but you likewise.

There are things that should be treated with delicacy. Some things are better left unpublished, because their publication would do more harm than good, and because they are not important enough to make not printing them suppression of worth-while news.

If Bill Jenkins and Pat O'Leary, two usually well behaved men, get into a scrap and blacken each others' eyes, and neither goes to court about it, the item can be suppressed. It is unimportant, and both men have friends who would regret to have the unfortunate occurrence heralded to the world. If in the scrap the nose of one of the combatants is broken, or his ear chewed off, make an item of it, because it is unusual. If the altercation ends with an arrest, or a lawsuit, tell about it. Court proceedings always have news value.

The birth of an illegitimate child should not be treated as news. Most people will pity the mother and prefer that as little publicity as possible be given her shame. If the mother enters a suit for bastardy, you may write an item about it. Your paper may want it;

and it may not. Be careful how you write such items. As a general rule every item in a local newspaper should be written so that a child or the most sensitive person can read it.

There are many other news items of this class. Use good judgment about writing or not writing them.

Relating to vice: Sexual offenses should be treated with the greatest delicacy. Many newspapers ignore them unless there is, as their result, some action before a police or court official. As a general thing the community and mankind as a whole, to say nothing of the families of offenders, are better served by such newspapers than by the sensational papers, who feast upon material of this kind like buzzards upon a putrid carcass. Where the correspondent does not know the policy of his paper in such matters, he had best ignore such offenses altogether, unless one or more persons are prosecuted, or are sure to be prosecuted, if caught. In the latter case the correspondent should state the plain facts in the case, as a separate item, and call the attention of the editor to the same. The editor can then treat the item in accordance with the paper's policy.

Never keep an item out of the paper because some person who likes to seem peculiar asks you to keep it out, or because someone makes threats to do this or that if you publish the item. Send in all the news that is fit to print.

If someone requests you to keep an item out of the paper, and there seems to be plausible reasons for doing so, submit the facts to the editor and let him assume the responsibility.

Occasionally you will be requested to withhold news until some time in the future. Cases of this kind that merit consideration are pending business deals, where documents relating thereto have not yet been signed; or, arrests, where keeping quiet the arrest for a short time might lead to the apprehenison of other persons implicated with the crime.

Sometimes it is good policy to comply with such requests. As the paper always wants the news as fresh as possible, the best thing for you to do in such cases is to get all the facts you possibly can and to write the item. Send it to the editor with a note, telling who wants publication withheld, how long, and why. Then the editor can use his own judgment.

Where to Get the News

WHERE TO GET THE NEWS

NEWS has no definite source. It comes from everywhere, therefore is likely to be found almost anywhere. Some of the biggest pieces of news have been picked up by a reporter casually overhearing a conversation on the street, in a public building or on the trolley. He who wants to become a good news-gatherer must at all times keep his eyes and ears open and his note book ready.

While news comes from almost anywhere, there are persons and places the environments of which adapt them particularly well to the collection of fresh news. Following this paragraph, you will find a selected list of such, together with information regarding the kind of news you might obtain through them. You will find it of much assistance in your work.

Agricultural implement dealers—news among farmers.

Assessors—items about increase in valuation, number of births and deaths during the past year and such other statistical matter as the law of your state requires assessors to collect.

Banks—real estate sales, changes of ownership of stores, etc.; new business undertakings, business failures.

Barbers—local sports and news among men.

Church officers—church board doings.

Constables—crime, arrests, lawsuits, etc.

Dressmakers—news among women.

Elevators—news among farmers.

Garages—news about trips, parties, etc., when automobiles are used for transportation.

Hotels—arrival of prominent persons.

Justices of peace—arrests, lawsuits, real estate news.

Lawyers—lawsuits, real estate transactions, etc.

Lodge officers—lodge news.

Managers of baseball and similar clubs—news about games, players, etc.

Mayors—corporation matters, arrests, lawsuits, etc.

Milliners—news among women.

Ministers — marriages, deaths, funerals, baptisms, church news.

Notaries—real estate transactions.

Old inhabitants—historical matter, timely at anniversaries, tearing down old structures, etc.

Physicians—births, accidents, illness, deaths.

Post office employees and mail carriers — general news of the neighborhood.

Public officials—public affairs.

Railroad employees—traveling, accidents.

Real estate agents—deals, new business projects.

Society officers—news of societies.

Station agents of railroads, traction lines — news about traveling, accidents, etc.

Store employees—general neighborhood news.

Telephone operators—general neighborhood news.

Town clerks — news relative to town finances and affairs.

Town marshals—crimes, arrests, lawsuits.

Township clerks—news of the doings of the trustees.

Undertakers—deaths, burials.

Women's clubs—club doings, general neighborhood news.

How to Get News

HOW TO GET NEWS

TO begin with, supply yourself with a note book that you can easily carry in your pocket. Always carry this and a sharp pencil with you. Loose leaf note books are the most convenient, although somewhat expensive. End opening books, the leaves of which are fastened together at the top instead of at the side, are best.

Whenever you run across an item, jot it down in your note book, putting down enough of the story so that you can write the rest from memory. Write names in full, and write them plainly. Trusting your memory with names should never be practiced. Write them down, and keep a name and address book for ready reference. The first clue you get to a story may be merely a rumor. The person from whom you receive it may not be able to give sufficient information. In that case ask him where he heard it and make inquiry there. Chase the story down to a reliable source. Get all the information you can, and get it accurately. Write the item as soon as possible after getting your information, while it is still fresh in your mind.

Frequently you will hear of something that is going to take place some time in the future. Perhaps it is a

marriage, a party, an entertainment or a real estate deal. Make a memorandum of such coming events in a separate part of your note book and refer to these notes every time that you begin to gather items for the next news letter. It will call to mind many items that would have been forgotten, because a month or two may have passed since you first heard about them.

The telephone is the news-gatherer's most valuable assistant. Use the telephone freely, to call up your friends and other news sources that you have developed. Get all those who occasionally furnish news to you in the habit of calling you up by telephone whenever they know any news. The larger the number of assistant news-gatherers of this kind you keep working for you, the better and newsier will be the letters you write to the paper.

While the telephone is your greatest aid, do not overlook the advantage of a personal interview. Whenever possible, important stories should be covered by a personal interview. It often enables the news-gatherer to treat the story more intelligently and accurately and to go into more detail. He will frequently be given inside information during a personal interview which the person interviewed would not have entrusted to the telephone. A story given to a news-gatherer during a personal interview is much less likely to contain exaggerations and prevarication than one given by telephone. The facial expression of the person interviewed will often instinctively tell the interviewer that

he is not being told the whole truth, or that the story is being colored. When this happens, he can get the story correct, by other inquiry, while if he had spoken over the telephone instead, an inaccurate story would have been the result.

Whenever news that seems important is refused to you on an inquiry by telephone, resort to the personal interview. You will be much less likely to meet with a refusal.

Some sources of news can be so developed, that all the correspondent need do when he seeks such a source is to say—"What is the news?" or "Anything new?" and all the news obtainable from that source will be forthcoming. Sources of this kind are few.

A great deal of the most interesting news is secured through indirect inquiry. For instance, the correspondent may meet Mr. Fields, a prominent farmer, at the railroad station, approach him, pencil and note book in hand.

"Do you know any news, Mr. Fields?" and be answered, "No." You may ask him, "You seem to be waiting for the train. Are you going away?"

"No," he may answer, "I am expecting my son home."

In the latter case further inquiry may bring out the fact that the son has just been graduated from some medical college with highest honors and that he is coming home to establish himself as a physician in a neighboring village. This would be material for an

item of much interest to the relatives and friends of the new physician and the people among whom he intends to practice medicine.

You will do well to enter into conversation with persons who have just furnished you with a news item, and to draw them out. They may know of other news which momentarily they do not think of, or which does not seem of interest to them.

To become a good correspondent and news-gatherer, one must, in addition to keeping eyes and ears open and note book ready, be quick to detect what might be a news item and to get the most reliable information about it.

While every correspondent should have a note book ready, it is policy not to make a display of it. Many persons do not like to be questioned by newspaper men. To avoid spoiling an interview with such persons, it is often best not to exhibit a note book until at least a good part of the story has been secured. Then it will be more difficult for the person interviewed to refuse further information, or he may have already told you so much of the story that you can get the rest of it elsewhere without difficulty.

Some persons are so adverse to publicity that they will refuse to talk when a newspaper man approaches them. To overcome this attitude, explain that every person has friends and relatives living in distant places who take the local paper for the news items about their friends and relatives that it contains. Tell them

that it would really be an injustice to withhold news from these distant friends and relatives.

Always make persons who give you items feel that you appreciate this kindness, and that you will be thankful for additional items. If someone gives you an item that you already have, better leave the person under the impression that you did not know about it. If you do this, he may give you particulars of which you had not heard; and he will feel much better about it than if you said, "I know that already;" and he would be more likely to give you more items.

If a person gives you an item you cannot use, better say so, and give reasons; do not give the impression that it will be printed. The person may think that his item is important, and tell his friends that it will appear in the paper. On learning that it was not printed, his disappointment would be greater than if you had refused the item in the first place. Always thank people for items they have given you, whether you can use them or not.

How to Write the News

HOW TO WRITE THE NEWS

THE first thing to be considered under this head is the writing material. Paper and envelopes are nearly always furnished by the publisher, so this need not be discussed here.

Use a typewriter, if possible. If you do not possess a typewriter, the next best thing to use is a good fountain pen. Common steel pens are good but continually dipping them into the inkwell wastes time. Use black ink, or blue-black writing fluid. Lead pencil writing is hard to read by artificial light, for which reason the use of lead pencils should be avoided if possible. Indelible pencils are worse in this respect than common lead pencils, consequently more objectionable.

If the paper furnished you is not ruled, inquire from the editor whether the writing should be with the lines running across the narrow way of the paper, or across the long way. Copy with the lines running the narrow way is more convenient where type is set by hand; copy with the lines running the long way, where type is set on machines.

Write the name of the community or neighborhood from which you report and your name at the top of the first page, and number the pages 1, 2, 3, and so on.

If you add something to an item after you have written it and must insert another sheet, designate that with letters a, b, c, and so on. For instance, if you insert additional sheets between sheets 3 and 4, mark them 3a, 3b, 3c, and so on.

Always write only on one side of the paper. If you write on both sides, one side is likely to be overlooked.

Writing should not be crowded. Leave plenty of margin for corrections, alterations and additions. Unless you receive other instructions from your editor, leave about an inch margin on the left-hand side and leave a blank line after each item, to separate it from the following item. To show the beginning of each item, indent the first line (that is, begin it farther to the right than the other lines) at least an inch.

Handwriting need not be artistic, but it must be plain and easily read. Be sure to dot your i's and cross your t's. Be careful to write your e's, g's, and l's with the loops well open. Take pains to prevent your i's, q's and t's from having loops that make them resemble e's, g's and l's. Never make a scrawl that is difficult to decipher out of the last few letters of a word.

Some letters are easily confused. Among them are "A" with "S," "F" with "T," "H" with "St," and "I" with "T," "L" with "S," "M" and "N" with "W," "a" with "o," "d" with "cl," "e" with "i," "h" with "k," "me" and "mi" with "nn," "o" with "v," "r" with "s" and "v" with "re." Write so that there can be no doubt as to which letters you mean. Make all capitals plainly.

Where an "a" might be taken for an "o," do as would be done by the editor, draw a short line under it. To distinguish "o" from "a," draw a short line over it. Where there is a chance of mistaking "n" for "u" or "u" for "n," draw a short line over "n" and under "u," thus: a, o, or n, u. You can easily remember where to draw the line by thinking of the words, "over" (over the first letter of which to draw a line), and "under" (under the first letter of which to draw a line).

Names of persons and other words that might be easily read wrong and misspelled, should be written in printed letters, thus: LAEMMERMANN. You cannot be too careful about writing figures plainly. If you want to change something you have written, never write over it. Mark it out or erase it and write it anew. Always rather use a few extra sheets of paper than cause the person who sets up your items to lose time trying to decipher your copy. "If in doubt, strike it out," is a good rule.

Avoid dividing words as much as possible and never divide a word so that part of it is on one sheet and part on the following sheet. Never begin a sentence with figures. Spell out the figures, or change the sentence so that the figures do not come at the beginning. Unless there are many of them, spell out definite numbers up to one hundred, as, seven, forty-three, one hundred. Spell out indefinite round numbers, as, three or four hundred, nearly a million. Use figures for ages, for amounts, for time, for dates and for house or lot num-

bers, but spell out the names of numbered streets. Write in figures, 7 years old, $14.12, 7 o'clock, May 14 and, 237 Maple street, but spell out, Fourteenth street.

Write as nearly grammatically correct as you know how, but always use simple words and expressions. A newspaper goes to all kinds of people and is read by the uneducated as well as by the cultured. Big words and flowery figures of speech are out of place in it.

Avoid the use of slang or hackneyed (worn-out) phrases. Be not the first to use a newly coined word. Nicknames should be avoided, especially those that might offend, like "Dago," "Mick," "Sheeny," "Dutchman," etc.

Spell correctly. A small dictionary will help you greatly in doing this. Badly misspelled copy is often hard to make out, generally much more so than copy containing many errors in grammar.

Be accurate. Such expressions as "it is understood," "we have been informed," "it is reported," or, "we have heard," should not be used. They make an item seem unreliable. People want to read facts. Where possible, avoid such expressions as "several," "a number of," "some time ago," "out west." They lack definiteness. When a person breaks his arm or leg, say whether it is the right one or the left one. If he has only one and breaks that, say so. It is unusual and will make an item more interesting.

Never take for granted that people already know part of your story. Tell the whole story. If you write

about something that you wrote about in an earlier news letter, repeat enough of the story so that persons who failed to read what you wrote before can get sense out of the item. Example: If you wrote about a runaway last week, in which James Morris was injured, instead of stating "James Morris is in a serious condition," rather state "James Morris, who was injured in a runaway on Tuesday of last week, is in a serious condition."

Pattern your items to some extent after similar items that you have read in well-edited newspapers, but it is unwise to ape their style. Develop a style of your own, by telling your stories in much the same language as that you would use in telling them to a well educated acquaintance. Do not shrink from using original expressions, but do not overwork originality. Watch the changes the editor makes in what you have written; it will aid you greatly in learning to write well.

Do not pad items by using twenty words where seven or eight would do, or by adding unimportant details. Try each week to fill the space the paper can give your news letter with as many different items as you can. If you have not much news, nevertheless tell it in as few words as possible. The editor may be glad to use the space you did not fill for an excess of news sent in by some other correspondent, who was more fortunate or more diligent than you. Always look over what you have written, and shorten it if possible, even if you must re-write part of it. The meaning of the following

expressions, for example, would be just as clear, if the words printed in bold face were left out: "He paid **the sum of** $5.50 for it." "Solicited from the **various** local lodges." "The horse ran, and **before Brown could stop him,** threw the rider." "No good **at all.**"

Never refer to yourself as "we," or as "your correspondent." Only the editor of the paper is supposed to have the right to say "we" when speaking of himself. Expressions like "your correspondent" take up space and make the item harder to understand. When speaking of yourself, give your full name, instead of saying "I" or "me," the same as with any other person, so that every reader will know of whom you are speaking. Do not make mention of yourself in your items in any other way than you would mention anyone else. Do not use your name oftener, or less often, than you would use the name of any other person in the item, if it had been he, instead of you.

A few words about grammar: Use capital letters at the beginning of each sentence and for the first letter in titles, like Mr. and Dr., and for the first letter in proper nouns, such as the names of persons, towns, states, counties, rivers, lakes and mountains and of the seven days of the week and the twelve months of the year.

Place a period at the end of each sentence. So that it will not be overlooked, it is well to make a small cross (x), instead of a dot, for a period. This is usually done in newspaper offices.

Do not use foreign words when English words will do just as well, and do not use them in connection with English words. Say "a dollar a day," not "a dollar per diem," or "a dollar per day."

Avoid the use of "ain't" or "don't;" it is not good English.

Do not use "don't" when you mean "does not." "Doesn't" is the abbreviation for "does not."

Especially avoid "He don't," or "She don't."

Use "balance" only when you speak of book accounts. Say "balance on hand, $19.43," but "rest of the family," "remainder of the people."

Party (for person) and proven (for proved) are used in law only. In speaking of a person, do not say "party," unless you are speaking of a "party" to a contract or to a lawsuit. Except in reporting court cases, say "proved" and not "proven," and even then "proved" is preferable.

Avoid "donate" for give; "individual" for person; "in our midst" for among us, or "transpire" for happen.

Say "less" when the thing is weighed or measured, as "less butter;" but "fewer" when the articles are counted, as "fewer eggs."

Under no circumstance use "splendid" when you speak of something to be admired or something agreeable. "He felt badly" is just as incorrect as if you said "You look gladly," or "I feel finely;" say "He felt bad."

How to Tell the Story and What to Say

HOW TO TELL THE STORY AND WHAT TO SAY

ORDINARILY every news item should answer the following questions, insofar as they concern the item:

Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

Memorize these questions and make use of them every time that you are getting information about some happening you intend to write about.

If the answer to none of these questions has been omitted in the item, then it is pretty likely to contain at least the main facts. To make the item a complete news story, all important details must be added. These vary so greatly in number and kind, that to even attempt a general description of them, goes beyond the scope of this book. Many are referred to in the instructions how to write up certain kinds of news, printed farther back in this book. Others the correspondent will himself readily discover.

Who?—The answer to this question, as written in a news item, is most often the name of a person. It may be the name of a building, as with a fire; or the name of a railroad, as with a wreck, etc.

If the answer is the name of a person or persons, be careful to get it correct. Every person has the right to spell his name to suit himself; and no person likes to see it spelled in any other way than he spells it himself.

If one branch of a family calls itself Davies and another Davis, or one Smythe and the other Smith, respect the taste of each. If a young lady writes her name Grayse, instead of Grace, or Llewella, instead of Luella, write it the same way. If someone had rather be called O. Wellingholthausen Bosh than Oliver W. Bosh, call him so. If another prefers to have his name written Jack or Jno., rather than John, let it be Jack or Jno. Make it J. P. Cook, if he prefers it, to John P. Cook.

If you are not sure about it, do not hesitate to ask even your nearest friend how he writes his name. Always write the name just as the person writes it himself.

Nicknames adhere so closely to some persons that they hardly are known by their right names. If you must use nicknames, to make plain whom you are writing about (and such occasions should be rare), do it in about the following style: "John Walker, known among his friends as 'Doc' Walker," or "John Walker, better known as 'Doc' Walker."

When writing about ladies, always use the titles Mrs. and Miss. The plural of Mrs. is Mesdames; the plural of Miss is Misses. When you write about a number of ladies, some of whom are married and some single,

separate the names of married ones from those of the single ones and write "Mrs. So-and-so, Mrs. So-and-so, and Miss So-and-so." "Mesdames" is really French instead of English, and its meaning unknown to many people. Use "Mrs." before the names of each married woman in preference to using "Mesdames" before the entire list of them.

Refer to a married couple as Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Jacobs rather than as J. P. Jacobs and wife. Some papers, however, prefer the latter style. Write in conformity with the style, and always use the same style—do not vary it.

Do not use the title Mr. when speaking of men only. The name only is sufficient.

In enumerating the persons in a mixed crowd give the married couples first; follow with the married women whose husbands were not in the crowd, next with the unmarried women, and end with the married men whose wives were not present and the unmarried men, in this style:

Those present were: Mr. and Mrs. James Allen, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Coon, Mr. and Mrs. Rolland Newman; Mrs. Robert Brown, Mrs. Mary Roberts; the Misses Rose Beeman, Katherine Cloud and Nellie Morris; John Ault, Peter Saylor and Hiram Walker.

A widow may use either her own christian name, or that of her deceased husband. Use the name the widow uses, or the one under which she is best known by her friends.

Where those present at the occasion you are writing about consisted of whole families, with only small children, you can refer to them as Mr. and Mrs. John White and children, or as John White and family, whichever way will conform with the style used by your paper.

When reporting a list of names, it is a good idea to arrange each kind in alphabetical order, according to family name, thus:

Mr. and Mrs. J. Q. Adams, Mr. and Mrs. Rodger Berry, Mrs. Susan Brown, Mrs. John Meyers, Mrs. Allen Woods, etc.

Not only will this prevent cause for complaint from some too easily offended person, whose name happened to appear last in the list, but it will often bring to your mind a name you would have overlooked.

When you give names, be sure to give them all. If somebody's name is left out, that person is almost sure to consider it a personal slight.

Be sure to use titles, such as Dr., Judge, Rev., Prof., Sergeant, Captain, Governor, etc.

The title Rev. should be preceded by the article "the." Say "the Rev. A. L. Buell," not "Rev. A. L. Buell." Use Father or Reverend Father when speaking of Catholic priests. Give dentists and veterinary surgeons the title "Dr." When necessary for the sake of clearness, say Dr. H. M. Real, the dentist; Dr. W. C. Hobart, the veterinary. Say former Judge, not ex-Judge. Do not have a long title precede the name, put

it after the name, as John Jewell, keeper of records and seals.

When writing an item about a child, make it clear that it is a child, by expression like, "George, the 10-year-old son of," or "Beatrice, the infant daughter of."

What?—The thing that happened is the answer to this question, as for instance, a house was destroyed by fire; an old settler died; a horse ran away; a bridge collapsed.

When?—Possible answers to this question are: At 10 o'clock Monday evening; at 4 in the morning last Wednesday; some time between Saturday evening and Monday morning. We spend "Tuesday" with friends; visit "over Sunday" with relatives.

Except in trivial matters, be exact in stating the time. Use figures for the hour, and say 4 o'clock, not four o'clock. Do not say 7 a. m. Tuesday, say 7 o'clock Tuesday morning. Always spell out the names of the days of the week and of the months of the year. Say Monday and Saturday, not Mon. and Sat.; say July and October, not Jul. and Oct., and do not use t, d, etc., after dates. Say May 1 and July 3, not May 1st and July 3rd.

Never use the expression "Sundayed." It is just as silly and improper as would be day-before-yesterdayed or Fourth-of-Julyed.

Never say "yesterday" or "tomorrow." Give the day

of the week or of the month. Tomorrow may be yesterday at the time your item is printed. Avoid "the 23rd inst.," give the month, as May 23.

Where?—Some answers to this question are: At the home of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Herbert E. Carhart, near Bainbridge Chapel; at the home of his son, David A., near Jonesboro; at the intersection of Elm and Baird streets; on the Lincoln Highway, three miles east of Elmhurst, near the West Farm; at the Masonic Hall; in the alley back of Moore's grocery.

Be sure to give the correct location and to give it in such a way that it cannot be misunderstood. If there are two United Brethren churches in a town, state which one; if Charles Edwards, father, and Charles Edwards, son, live on the same street, state if it is in the house of Charles Edwards, Sr., or Charles Edwards, Jr.; if there are two Smiths in the grocery business in a town, do not say Smith's grocery, say H. M. Smith's grocery or Edward Smith's grocery. In some cases the location should be described minutely, for instance, when the body of a murdered man is found.

Why?—This question is answered by giving the cause. A train was wrecked because of a defective rail; a building was destroyed because it was set on fire by lightning; a horse ran away because it became frightened at a tractor, etc. Not every item gives an answer to this question. In case of a marriage, for example,

it is taken for granted that the bride and groom married each other for love. Even if there was ground to believe that such is not the case, it would not be proper to say this in the item about the wedding.

How?—The answer to this question should comprise all the details not given in the answers to the first five questions.

The question, "How were the young couple married?" might be answered simply "by the priest." This would not be sufficient to make the item complete. There must be more detail. How? Were there attendants? How? Was the ring service used? How? What kind of dress did the bride wear? The correspondent should ask the question, How? in as many ways as he can think of, but should answer it only when the answer seems to be of sufficient importance and interest.

Like the question, Why? the question, How? is frequently left unanswered in an item. When a person goes to a neighboring town it is never answered by saying that he went on the train; neither is it answered in the report of a political election, by telling that it was by ballot. In such cases the answer is so unimportant, or so well understood, that it is not worth while to give.

One of these questions may suggest another. While a news item rarely contains more than one answer to the question, When? there will often be several answers to the other questions. Additional answers to

any one of the questions usually suggest additional answers to some of the other questions. For example, when we ask the question, How? Were there attendants? The question, Who were they? suggests itself and must be answered.

What the More Common News Items Should Contain

WHAT THE MORE COMMON NEWS ITEMS SHOULD CONTAIN

THE following paragraphs contain suggestions as to what facts and details should usually go into the more common news items. You will find these suggestions very helpful, even when writing items of news of which they make no mention. For instance, the paragraph about anniversaries, dances and parties will be of assistance in writing up a celebration of any kind; the paragraphs about accidents and fires will be of assistance in writing about cyclone or flood.

When making use of these suggestions, always bear in mind that you need not tell everything that is suggested you should tell; also, that by adding interesting, unusual or important facts not mentioned in the suggestions, you may tell more. The length of the item you write should in every case depend upon its importance, the prominence of the persons concerned and the interest the public takes in the happening. It depends, furthermore, upon the space your paper can give items and neighborhood news in general.

Never forget that you must be absolutely fair and impartial to everybody. The dollar paid for subscription by the poorest laborer is worth just as much to the

publisher as the dollar paid by the multimillionaire. Festivities among the poor should receive just as careful consideration as those among the rich; their misfortunes and misdeeds should be treated with the same sympathy and fairness as those of the wealthy. A wedding or other festivity in the house of a poor laborer will not be so elaborate as a "swell" affair in the palace of a millionaire. There will be fewer details to write about. You will have less material, so naturally will write a shorter article. Under no circumstances let this induce you to leave out either an essential fact or a single name.

Suggestions for writing the more common news items:

Accidents: Give full particulars, including nature of accident, time and place, names of persons killed or injured, property loss, cause of accident. Tell about condition of those injured and what physicians gave first aid. In giving the cause of a fatal or serious accident, do not directly accuse some particular person or persons, unless arrests have been made. Simply state facts, in plain language. If someone was killed in the accident, add such details concerning him in the item as are usually included in a death or funeral notice.

Amateur theatricals: See "entertainments" and treat as such.

Anniversaries: See article on "parties" and treat in a similar manner. Tell, in addition, what kind of an anniversary, whether the seventh, a silver or golden anniversary. If it is a golden wedding anniversary, state when and where the couple were married; how many children they had and how many of them are living, and who they are; how many grand-children and how many great-grandchildren. Tell about the health of the old couple and the presents they received and give any other particulars that you believe are interesting. Treat silver weddings much the same way but go less into details. They are much more common than golden weddings, so do not have as great a news value.

Balls: See article on "dances."

Baseball games: If the teams are from your neighborhood, give the names of the players and the position each played. Be absolutely fair to both teams, the visitors as well as the home team. If the umpire was "rotten," say little or nothing about it. The members of the team that was "robbed" will attend to making it known among their home people; and the other people will care little about it, perhaps will not even believe you if you say something about it. Give every player credit for the good plays he makes and forget to mention the poor ones as much as possible.

Birthday parties: See article on "parties," and treat in similar manner. If the person whose birthday was

celebrated is a man or child, give the age. If it is a woman, then it is generally better not to mention the age. Some women, especially single women who are past the youthful stage, do not like to be reminded of their age.

Births: Tell to whom born and when, and whether it was a boy or girl. If mother and child are well, that may be mentioned. (If the mother is in a critical condition and her life in danger, or if the child died some time after being born, then the matter should not be treated as a birth, but as one telling about illness or death.) Phrases like "proud parents," "home was brightened," "Mr. and Mrs. William Dudley are now grand-parents," are customary in birth notices. It is proper to say something pleasant at such occasions, especially if the child is the first-born, as then its arrival is an important event in the life of its parents. Refrain from writing would-be jokes on the father. (It has happened that before the paper containing such "jokes" reached the father, both mother and child had died.)

Bridges and buildings: In telling about new structures that are to be erected or have just been completed, say for whom, and to whom the contract for their construction has been given. Tell what material will be used and whether it is a new structure or an alteration or improvement of an old one. Give exact location.

Tell when work on it is to begin or when it has been completed. If a public building, bridge, etc., give approximate cost. If anything unusual or of general interest tell it.

Business changes: Give particulars, stating only what is of interest to the public. In cases of changes of ownership where someone retires from the business, say something about that person's future plans.

Burglaries: Tell when, where and how they took place and who suffered by them. Give kind and value of stolen property. If there are any clues or arrests, tell about them. Add any particulars that you think are important or interesting.

Club doings: See articles on "women's clubs," "elections" and "entertainments." They will give you an idea of what to write and how to write it.

Commencements: Give the time and place and the names of the graduates and tell who was graduated with first and who with second honors. If space permits, give names of subjects of the essays or orations of all the graduates. Tell who delivered the address and who furnished the music.

Concerts: See article on "entertainments," and treat them as such.

Contests: In reporting the result of contests, give the names of the winners. It is usually best not to mention the names of the losers. They would rather not see their names in print on such an occasion. When writing about coming contests, the names of all contestants should be given.

Crops: Town people are not greatly interested in items about crops; country people generally know all about their condition. Let anything you say about crops be brief, unless it is something unusual or that is unknown to most of the readers of the paper. For instance, if the farmers in your neighborhood raise the strawberries that supply the markets of the nearby towns and are the only ones in that region that make a business of raising them, then an item telling that the late frosts have killed the strawberries would be news, because it would be unknown to other readers in that section.

Dances and balls: Give time and place and name of club, society or persons who arranged it. If given in somebody's honor or for some particular occasion, state so. If only those who were invited were admitted and they do not constitute a club of some kind that regularly gives dances for its members only, give names of those who attended. If a dance was given for club members only, give names of guests, if any. Tell what organization furnished the music. If music was fur-

nished by local persons who are not organized for the purpose, give name of each and tell what instrument he played. If there were decorations or a banquet, tell about them. Public dances generally come under the head of advertising and should be treated as such.

Deaths: When writing about deaths, let your language be earnest and sympathetic. Give full name of the person that died; date, time of day and cause of death and tell how long deceased was sick. If a child, tell in addition who its parents were, when it was born, and give its age on the day it died.

If death was that of a grown person, add the following additional particulars: If he was not born where he died, tell when he removed from the place of his birth and when he came to the place where he died. Give a brief sketch of his life, telling about his occupation, his business connections and the offices he held, the lodges he was a member of, etc. If he was a soldier, state what war he fought in and what company he was a member of. Tell anything he did for the betterment of his friends and neighbors and the community. If his parents survive him, say so. State how many brothers and sisters are yet living and who they are.

In case of the death of a married person, state, in addition, how often he was married, when, where, and to whom. If a wife or husband died before, tell who, when and where. If a wife or husband survives, state it. Tell how many children there were, how many died

and how many are yet living and who they are. Tell how many grandchildren and how many great-grandchildren are living.

Give the day on which the funeral will take place, the time of day it will leave the house and (if a church funeral) when it will leave the church. Give the name of the minister who will have charge of the funeral and say what church be belongs to. Tell where the body will be buried. If possible, get your information from the family, so that you will have it correct. The undertaker will generally be glad to assist you in getting information.

Words of consolation and allusions to the good qualities of the deceased person are always proper in death notices, but they must be made use of judiciously and dare not be overdone. Never allude to a man who during his life was a notorious drunkard, idler and deadbeat as a "prominent" citizen. His bad qualities may have given him prominence, but this prominence was not of the kind his family wants publicity given to. Do not say of a man who was noted for his stinginess, "He gave liberally to institutions of charity and to all other worthy causes." Always stick close to the truth, for even then you can always find something to say. Words like, "Death relieved him of long and patient suffering," are not out of place no matter what was the character of the deceased; and they help alleviate the sorrow of the bereaved.

Where you report the funeral at the same time with

the death, add the account of it to your story of the death. See article about funerals for instructions how to write it.

Early grain, fruits and vegetables: Be brief. Report only things that are altogether unusual.

Elections: Give time, place and names of officers elected. Never say that the old officers were re-elected. Few persons would know who they are, and you would be missing a chance to get names into your items. Women's club officers might feel offended if you called them the "old" officers.

Entertainments: Tell what, when, and where. If the entertainment is arranged by local persons, or for the benefit of a church, school, lodge, or society, give names of those who arranged it. If the space at your disposal permits, give the program, with the names of those who sang, played, or performed in some other way. Include the names of those who accompanied the singers or musicians. Slight no one. If the entertainment is a benefit entertainment, state how much money was realized and for what purpose it will be used. If your paper does not object to advance notices of such events, it is oftentimes better to send in the program, with the names of the performers, in time for publication before the entertainment takes place. It is then of greater interest, as it will be news to most of those who will attend.

Farmers' institutes and gatherings: Treat similar to "entertainments."

Firms: Tell briefly about the formation of new and the changes or dissolution of old firms. If one or more of the members are retiring, tell what their plans for the future are.

Fires: Give description and location of building; name of owner; name of family or concern occupying it; if occupant is a business concern tell what business he was in. Give day and hour when fire was discovered, where and how it started, the cause or probable cause, contents of building, amount of insurance. If insured in a local mutual company, state so. If there were narrow escapes, or daring deeds, or unusually good work on the part of the firemen or others, tell about it. Tell whether the owner is planning to rebuild. If live stock perished, tell what it was. If the building was damaged to such extent that it is unfit for further use, tell about the owner's plans regarding rebuilding; also about the plans of the occupants, pending rebuilding. If the building destroyed was an old landmark, a history of it can be added to the item, or a separate item can be made of it.

Former residents: Visits of persons who formerly lived in a community but have been away from it and have not visited it for many years, are interesting.

Such persons notice the changes and improvements in the community much more than persons who have lived there during their absence. They often tell long forgotten interesting stories of the past. When you report about such a visitor, tell who he is, where he lived before leaving your locality, who are his near relatives there, when he moved away and where to. If he has prospered in his new home, a few words about it will not come amiss. Tell about the improvements in his old home neighborhood that impressed him most. If he tells any stories of the past that seem of sufficient interest, weave them into the item.

Football games: Treat similar to "baseball games,"

Freaks and curiosities: Do not tell about these unless they are really freaks or curiosities, and unless they have been discovered recently. Do not permit some local collector of cheap curiosities to induce you to parade his "junk" before the public in your news letters.

Funerals: Give time and place services were held, name of minister in charge and what church he is affiliated with, of the pall bearers, and of the undertaker who conducted the funeral. Specify what music was rendered and who the singers and players were. Give place of burial. Say something about floral offerings, but do not give a list of them. If lodges or other

organizations attended the funeral in a body, mention this. If the funeral was conducted under the auspices of some lodge or society, tell about it and give names of officers in charge. If friends or relatives came from other places to attend the funeral you may state this in the item, or you may make a separate personal item of it.

If the account of the funeral is not given in connection with the account of the death, but in a later news letter, then connect the funeral item with the death item by repeating the main facts of the latter in a brief way. This is necessary, that persons who did not read the news about the death can better understand the item about the funeral. The two items can easily be connected, by the use of such expressions as, "who died at the home of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Hobart, near Lily church, last Tuesday afternoon, of pneumonia." See article about "deaths" for instructions how to write them.

Historical items: These should be used only when they are timely because of some happening to a person or object that had connection with them, such as the death of an early settler or the survivor of a disaster, or the tearing down of an old building, bridge or other structure. Tell the things that you believe are interesting and distinguish between facts and tradition.

House-warmings and home-comings: See articles on "reunions" and "parties" and treat in a similar manner.

Humorous happenings: These always make interesting reading matter. Write them up in as light a vein as you can, and be careful not to offend anyone. If they contain anything at which some person might easily take offense, write the item, show it to that person, and ask permission to publish it. "If in doubt, strike it out."

Illness: Be brief. "John Brown is on the sick list," is not real news; tell what ails him, unless to do so would be embarrassing. Do not say "Henry Saylor is complaining again." It is too indefinite. Henry might be complaining about the weather, or about his wife's cooking. When a person is suffering from some chronic ailment, referring to it repeatedly, unless there are now more serious developments, is tiresome to the readers. While you may remark about the patient being in a serious condition, be careful not to say anything that will take away all hope of recovery. "He will not recover," or "He is not expected to live over Sunday," are statements that sound like a death warrant to the patient, and, if he should perchance read them, might have a bad effect on his condition. Rather write something hopeful and encouraging.

Installations: Treat similiar to "elections." Name installing officers and tell about festivities, if there were such.

Inventions: Most inventors believe that they have invented something of importance. Great inventions are comparatively rare. Be brief.

Lawsuits: Give full particulars. Treat in a fair and impartial way. Do not listen to the story of one side of the case only.

Lectures: Tell what the lecture was about, but do not attempt to give an account of what was said. In other ways treat similar to entertainments.

Marriages: See article under "weddings" and treat as such.

Murders: Give name of person murdered. If there are no eye-witnesses to tell about the deed, give exact place where body was discovered, and time of discovery. Tell about the methods used by the murderer, and the probable motive for the deed. If there have been any arrests, state so and give names and particulars. If no arrests and there are clues, tell about them. Do not overlook a single detail that would make your account of the murder more interesting or more complete. Treat the rest of the story like any other death or funeral.

Newcomers: Tell who they are, where they come from and when, where they expect to live, what is the

occupation of the head of the family, and what he expects to do.

Ownership, changes of: See article on "business changes" and treat as such.

Parties: Give the time, place and occasion; tell what was done and give the names of those present. Overlook no parties given by parents for their children, and always give the names of children who attended such parties. See article on "birthday parties" for additional particulars about such.

Obituaries: Unless the person these are written about is very prominent, obituaries, excepting such matter as is usually included in death or funeral items, are generally considered advertising. Obituary poetry should always be considered advertising.

Personals: These include a large variety of trivial happenings that probably are considered news only because they give the editor opportunity to get names into his paper that otherwise would possibly never appear there. Most of them tell of visits and traveling, but many other happenings belong under the head of personals. Examples: "Robert, the eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. James Channing, has taken employment at the city bank." "Mrs. Silas Harmsworth has received a box of fine oranges, a gift from her son, Perry,

at Sunnyside, Florida. They were grown on the son's own grove at Sunnyside."

While personals should always be brief, they should be exact and complete and should contain the names of as many persons as possible. It is much better to say "John Smith is visiting relatives at Chanute, Kansas," than "John Smith is visiting in Kansas." John likes to have it known that he has relatives and friends away from home. If the relatives or friends ever lived in your neighborhood or are known there, tell who they are and how they are related, as "his uncle, C. M. Smith and family." "Amos Long is taking a trip through the west," really means nothing. Tell where he is going, giving the names of the places where he will stop off, even if he does not expect to visit any persons there. The paper may have readers who live at these places or Amos may have relatives or friends there, who will feel interested. When one neighbor calls on another, that is too trivial and every-day a matter to make a personal note of. Make no mention of visits of persons who live less than say five miles from the place they are visiting; nor of the regular calls of young men on their sweethearts. Endeavor at all times to get into your personals the names of persons you never wrote about before. Above all things do not write personals **only** of your family, your relatives or your friends.

Private theatricals: See article on "entertainments," and treat as such.

Public sales: See article on "sales," and treat as such.

Receptions: See articles on "parties," and treat in a similar manner.

Removals: Say who, when, where from and where to. If the reason is unusual or interesting, give it.

Reunions: Treat similarly to "parties." Unless there were too many for the space your paper can give you, give the names of those who attended. Mention of the oldest persons present and of how many descendants they have living is usually fitting. If prominent persons from elsewhere attended, this should be told in the item.

Robberies: Give full particulars. Tell who was robbed, when and where it happened, and how it was done. State how many robbers there were and how much they secured. Tell whether the persons robbed were mistreated. If arrests or clues, give an account thereof.

Runaways: Treat as "accidents."

Sales: Tell briefly when, where and by whom held; if well attended or not; if unusual prices were received or unusual articles were sold. Most newspapers class advance notices of sales as advertising.

Sickness: See "illness."

Socials: Give names of those who arranged them, the amount realized, and for what purpose it is to be used. In other respects treat similar to parties and entertainments.

Stock companies, new: Give names of incorporators or promoters, purpose, amount of capital, names of officers and other particulars that you deem of sufficient interest.

Suicides: Give name, time of happening (time of discovery of body, if not discovered immediately after death, and probable length of time the person then was dead), place and method of committing the deed. If the suicide has written a statement of any kind, or if he said anything to friends or relatives that might indicate the cause of the deed, tell what it is; if not, give the probable cause. Treat the rest of the item as you would any other death or funeral.

Swindles: Give names, time and amount involved. Relate full particulars in such a way that other persons can take warning from them and keep on the lookout for the perpetrators.

Traveling, visits and visitors: See "personals."

Weather: The weather is usually pretty much the same all over the field covered by a local newspaper. Do not mention the weather unless that which you have differs greatly from that of the rest of your region. A hailstorm or windstorm that does damage is news, because of that damage.

Wedding anniversaries: See "anniversaries."

Weddings: Give the full name of the bride and the groom, the names of their parents; places of residence; the day and hour of the ceremony; the place where it was performed and by whom; if by a minister, what church he is connected with; names of the best man, bridesmaids, flower girls, pages and other attendants; whether a reception followed the ceremony and where it was held; whether the couple took a wedding trip; where they will live in the future and what is the groom's business.

Depending upon the prominence of the bride and groom and their families, further details may be added, such as description of the dresses of the bride, bridesmaids, and flower girls; of the decorations; how many courses the lunch contained; how many persons attended the reception; that the father gave away the bride; that the ring service was used; when the couple will be "at home" to their friends, etc.

A separate personal item may be made, giving the names and residence of out-of-town guests who at-

tended the wedding, or this may be included in the item about the wedding.

If space permits, something pleasant may be said about the bride and groom, but when doing this, stick close to facts. It is not wise to call a bride an accomplished musician, simply because she can thump the piano and butcher the latest ragtime, or because she can annoy the dogs in the neighborhood with her vocal performances. Do not say that the groom is a successful young business man, because his father several months ago gave him money to start a barber shop or a blacksmith shop. Avoid saying that the groom was attired in conventional black. Everyone will take for granted that he wore black, and unless he wore a football suit, a uniform, a bath robe, or something else than black, his clothes are not worth while mentioning.

The bride is the center of attraction at a wedding, and weddings are always of much more interest to women than to men. For that reason women can give more interesting accounts than men can. If you are a man, it may be well for you to have some woman write up the wedding for you. Some relative of the bride or groom, one of the bridesmaids, or perhaps the bride, will be glad to do this or to help you write the item. If possible, have the story written before the wedding takes place, and afterward add such details as could not be known in advance. There will be but few, as almost every detail of a wedding is planned in advance. If you have the story of the wedding in advance, you may be able to get it into an earlier issue of your paper.

A man should never attempt a description of a woman's dress; he will be sure to make a failure of it. If you cannot get some member of the fair sex to write a description for you, better not mention the dress at all. Never give a list of wedding presents. Every wedding interests a great number of persons and a correspondent should let none escape him.

Women's clubs: Keep record of when women's clubs will hold their regular meetings. Some officer of the ·ill be glad to give you the news about them. :n are among the newspaper's best friends. Never a news item that might interest them.

Things to Do and Things to Avoid

THINGS TO DO AND THINGS TO AVOID.

WRITE REGULARLY. A quarter-column news letter sent each week is worth more than a three-column letter sent once in six weeks.

Keep in mind that the paper you are writing for wants the news before any other paper gets it. Make it a point of honor to get each story to your paper before other correspondents send a story about the same happening to their papers, so that your paper can publish it first. Avoid writing about something that has already been published in the paper, unless you can give new, timely or interesting facts. Never delay sending in an item of importance because you find it difficult to write it. Give the editor the facts and ask him to write the item.

Send in the items the same week they happen, so that they can be printed while still fresh. Should you miss an item one week, send it the following week, rather than miss it altogether—provided it is a worth-while item and has not yet been printed. Get the news. Get it as fresh as possible, but get it.

Bear in mind that women read the newspapers more closely than men do. Overlook no item that might interest the women of your territory.

Be sure to get the names of as many persons as possible into your items. The most interesting thing in all literature, to the average person, is that person's name in print. " 'Tis pleasant, sure, to see one's name in print."

Avoid the habit of writing only personals, only church news, only school news, only one family news, or only some other kind of news. Write news of as many kinds as possible and all of it that you can secure. Tell the news about everybody and everything in your territory. There can be no poorer correspondent than he whose news letters tell what family or clique he belongs to.

Unless the story does not permit it (as, for instance, an offense against the law, about which you must report facts, in an impartial way), always try to write your items in such a manner that the persons concerned will read them with pleasure. If you report the arrest of somebody, or the bringing of a lawsuit against somebody and that person wants to make a statement, let him do so, in a few words, and make the statement part of your item. Never take sides. Always be fair and impartial to everybody.

Try as much as possible to report only from your own territory, but do not hesitate to send in an item of news from some other correspondent's territory, if you believe the other correspondent may miss it. Your paper wants all the news, and it wants it just as fresh as it can get it. Whenever two correspondents send

in an item about the same happening, the one received first by the editor will usually be printed. If both arrive at the same time, the more complete, or the better written item, will be printed.

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